



Guide Dog Foundation's Suncoast puppy Raisers Newsletter March 2017



Suncoast Puppy Raisers
Puppy Saturday Meeting

Date: March 11, 2017

**Where: The Landing Restaurant Bar and Grill
4351 Lynx Paw Trail, Valrico**

Time: 1:00pm – 4:00pm

Event: St. Pawsy Days Fundraiser for American Vet Dogs

Hi everyone,

Although we don't like to stray from our regularly scheduled second Saturday of the month meeting from 10:00am – 12:00pm, we have all learned it pays to be flexible. This month we are changing to a 1:00pm – 4:00pm format to support a fund raiser for GDF's American Vet Dog's program. The owner of The Landing restaurant has been a strong supporter of this program and as a member of their local Chamber of Commerce and in conjunction with working for Cruise Planners, their fund raising efforts have resulted in them sponsoring at least 5 GDF puppies. One of which was Tucker, raised by Karen Killen. This is not the first time the Suncoast Puppy Raisers have been to the restaurant and probably won't be the last. Although it is a bit of a drive for most of us, we feel strongly that as the local puppy raising group, we need to support this event. Besides, they are planning doggy costume contests and other festivities to raise money so I'm sure our pups will be well appreciated for participating.

Directions: From Pinellas take I275 to I4, I4 to I75 south, go to the Gibsonton Drive exit # 250 go east on Gibsonton Drive it will turn into Boyette road when you cross US 301, keep heading east on Boyette road it will turn into Fishhawk Ranch Blvd keep heading east on Fishhawk to Lithia Pinecrest turn left or north on Lithia Pinecrest the Landings will be a couple miles up Lithia Pinecrest on your right. There is a light at Lynx Paw turn right on Lynx Paw and right into parking lot.

If you use a Sunpass and coming from south or central Pinellas or south Tampa you can take the Leroy Selmon expressway from Gandy and Dale Mabry in Tampa to I75 South. This will be a little shorter and faster but you have tolls.

If you are using GPS it will most likely tell you to take Bloomingdale Blvd to Lithia Pinecrest. This is the shortest way but not the fastest. Traffic lights, heavy traffic on these roads are brutal so Chuck suggests you take Gibsonton Drive off of I75. It will add a few miles but save a lot of your time. Call Chuck if you have any questions.

Last Month

Thanks to everyone for coming out to support our table at the Mutt Derby event. The organizers of the event appreciated our participation. They also want to apologize for the event ending so early. The event was supposed to go to at least 4:00pm, but the races went off so smoothly, they couldn't believe they got done so early. The organizers do plan to spread the races out a little bit better to support visitors spending more time with the exhibitors. I couldn't see the races, but I heard the crowd roaring in laughter as personal pets ran all over the track avoiding their owners awaiting them at the end of the course. If we do participate next year, we are going to request that the guide dog puppies be given their own category and given a chance to show off their "recall" skills while raisers egg them on down the track. At any rate, if not embarrassing, at the least it will be entertaining!

The second outing for the pups was a visit to the Museum of Fine Arts for their monthly "Porch Party." Although I heard the appetizers were a little thin, it was a nice evening to spend our doors and socialize. Thank you Donna and Don for planning this event.

In For Training

Ashley, raised by Joe and Nancy O'Leary has just received her transport information and will be leaving shortly for her continued training in New York. In the O'Leary's own words, Ashley was a challenge to raise but she taught us a lot. I know there will be tears shed when she goes, but the best remedy is to get right back out there and raise another pup. Good job Nancy and Joe and we know Ashley will make us all proud.

Training Up Date

We got two glowing training reports from Southeastern about Rugby, raised by Francis Lucus, and Buddy, raised by Jackie Jordan. Both dogs are in advanced stages of training working under high traffic conditions, shopping malls with escalators and elevators and exposure to children and small animal **distractions**. **Both** dogs are performing well under all these circumstances and will continue moving forward in their training. Congratulations raisers, maybe we will be hearing about some graduation dates in the future.

New Puppy Raiser Group

We want to Congratulate Bethani Shilladay for agreeing to become an Area Coordinator for the Southwest section of Florida, including Fort Meyers, Sarasota and Naples. Bethani, currently raising her new puppy Cory, has been a long term raiser always willing to drive 2 hours or so to make our meetings since there was no other group in her area. Well, we have possibly 4 raisers besides Bethani in that geographical area which is more than enough to break them off into their own group. All that was needed was An AC, so Bethani agreed to step up to the plate. Even though she may have more responsibilities which she is more than capable of handling, at least she won't have to make the over 2 hour drives any more. Congratulations Bethani and thank you for your commitment to puppy raising and dedication to GDF.

Chuck was working during last month's meetings so he has no pictures. So the newsletter is brief this month. We hope to see you all at the Landings next Saturday the 11th.

Your Area Coordinators Debbie and Chuck Hietala



Suncoast Puppy Raisers
Area Coordinators:
Chuck and Debbie Hietala
Email: Chuck@Suncoastpup.org
Website: www.suncoastpup.org
Phone: 727-515-2105

Guide Dog Foundation
371 East Jericho Turnpike
Smithtown, NY 11787
Phone: (800) 548-4337
Fax: (631) 930-9009
Website: www.guidedog.org

